

Retired Fosterburg Fire Chief John Holtorf Says Goodbye

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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FOSTERBURG - Fosterburg Fire Chief John Holtorf announced today is his last day as Fosterburg Fire Chief.

This was Fire Chief Holtorf's statement: "Today is my last day as Fire Chief of the Fosterburg Fire Department. It is a bittersweet day for me, but I know it is time for a new lead, new direction, and fresh ideas.

"My time as Chief was made possible by the cooperation of the volunteers; these men and women put everything in motion, no matter the time of day or the weather. For that, I thank you all.

"I would also like to express a sincere thank you to the families of our department members. The families gave up a lot of family time for the members to be able to attend weekly training, as well as alarms that always seem to happen in the middle of the night or during family time. If you didn't allow that, where would we be?"

Chief Holtorf also expressed appreciation to the career staff members that work 48-hour shifts at a low pay scale.

"On top of the 48-hour shifts, they come in on days off for training sessions, fundraisers, as well as providing additional manpower on larger alarms. Great job guys. I would also like to thank our neighboring fire departments. As many already know, most of the fire departments in our county have a mutual aid agreement. This allows us to share manpower and equipment, which improves the protection for all of us.

"I would also like to express my gratitude to the Fosterburg Fire Protection District Board of Trustees. These men and women also give up time from their families to oversee the department, fulfilling a job that is often invisible to the public. They often have to make decisions that are very uncomfortable or unpopular, but they do what they have to do.

"I would also like to thank our community for your support, whether it be by attending our fundraising events, yielding to our emergency responders, or kindly heeding our traffic warnings during emergencies. I know your support of our department will continue into the future."

Holtorf started his career in 1986 soon after his enlistment in the U.S. Navy was fulfilled.

"I started as a volunteer when we had one fire station, and the main Engine was a 1969 front mount Engine. Under the previous Fire Chief, James Colman, we expanded to two stations with three Engines, a rescue truck, a rescue/brush truck, and a brush truck.

"I was promoted to Chief when Chief Colman retired in 1996, so it has been a long run. During that time, all of our vehicles have been replaced with newer, safer vehicles. The paid staff and the volunteers put many hours of labor into modifying these vehicles to better fit our needs.

"I am proud of all our members, and I know many will now have to adjust to new roles and responsibilities. But what makes me even prouder, I know they will do it and do it better."

Chief Holtorf added: "We are accepting applications for volunteers. If you want to join this great group of men and women in providing protection to our community, check our website for membership requirements. You will be joining a great team.

"We are also currently accepting applications for a hire list to join the career side of the department, but that will be closed shortly, so hurry if you are interested in an entry-level firefighter position."

The chief said he agreed with the board members' request to remain available to the new Fire Chief during the transition as an advisor.

"I will be around here and there. Feel free to stop in and say hello," Holtorf said.